



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$3.9 Million Grant for Research into Advanced Fibers and Fabrics for Defense Sector

Second award from Mass. Manufacturing Innovation Initiative (M2I2) grows partnership between MIT Lincoln Laboratory, U.S. Army's Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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**LEXINGTON, MA** — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative announced a \$3.9 million grant to support the second phase of research and development at the Defense Fabric Discovery Center, a cutting-edge research hub which opened in October. This award follows an [initial \\$2.2 million dollar grant](#) announced in May 2017 by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito to support the opening of the Defense Fabric Discovery Center and brings the Commonwealth's investment to the partnership between MIT Lincoln Laboratory and the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research Development & Engineering Center (NSRDEC) to \$6.1 million. Funding will support research & development into revolutionary fibers and fabrics with applications in the defense sector.

The grant was announced by Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash and was made as part of the Commonwealth's Massachusetts Manufacturing Innovation Initiative (M2I2), which provides a vehicle for the state to match federal investments made in the Manufacturing USA institutes, including the [Advanced Functional Fabrics of America](#) (AFFOA).

"By supporting important projects and organizations like this, the Commonwealth's M2I2 program helps ensure Massachusetts continues to lead in innovation and advanced manufacturing," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "The research and development of these revolutionary materials will have a direct impact on everyday safety of our brave service men and women."

The Center is a collaboration between AFFOA, MIT Lincoln Laboratory in Lexington, and the U.S. Army's Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Center. The new award will help the Center expand research into how to apply emerging advanced fiber and fabric technologies for defense applications, including equipment that will allow for end-to-end prototyping including computer-aided design (CAD) of functional fabrics, fiber and yarn device fabrication, textile system and assemblies, and system integration to develop smart uniforms, emergency medical supplies and portable shelters.

"Today's M2I2 grants will continue to support the development of cutting-edge technologies and advanced textiles here in Massachusetts," **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. "We are pleased to leverage the Commonwealth's strengths in innovation and manufacturing to bolster a partnership designed to support the challenges faced by the country's national security teams and our troops on the front lines,"

"A key part of our economic development strategy is to build on our world-class R&D organizations across the Commonwealth," **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash**. "Across the M2I2 spectrum, we're funding collaborative projects that build on our core strengths, investing in critical infrastructure and increasing access to the cutting-edge tools that small manufacturing companies need to pilot next-gen technologies."

In April 2016, the Department of Defense joined local leaders to announced the establishment of AFFOA in Massachusetts, a \$317 million public-private partnership to enable a domestic manufacturing-based

revolution by transforming traditional fibers, yarns, and fabrics into highly sophisticated, integrated and networked products and systems. The Defense Fabric Discovery Center, part of a network of AFFOA fabric discovery centers, specifically addresses challenges faced by the Department of Defense through innovations in advanced fiber and fabric technology. The Commonwealth's initial M2I2 award supported the [Center's official opening in October 2017](#).

"The Commonwealth's investment in the Defense Fabric Discovery Center creates a significant, new research and development capability at MIT Lincoln Laboratory," **said Eric Evans, Director, MIT Lincoln Laboratory**. "We are looking forward to working with others in the community to develop new fiber and fabric technology breakthroughs."

"The funding for the Defense Fabric Discovery Center announced today underscores the deep commitment of the Baker Administration and Secretary Ash to Advanced Fabric investments in support of national security and the U.S. Army," **said Yoel Fink, CEO of AFFOA**. "We are deeply appreciative of this support."

"Massachusetts has been a leader in manufacturing for centuries and the investment made today under the M2I2 program is another step to ensure that our research institutions, companies, and workers get the support that will allow them to lead throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century," **said Tim Connelly, Executive Director and CEO of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative**.

"The Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Center has a long history of data-driven innovation to support our troops," **said Senator Karen E. Spilka**. "This partnership will leverage our state's manufacturing, technology and science talent for continued product development to serve soldiers across the country."

"The center houses some of the top researchers in defense technology. I am pleased to see the Baker-Polito administration investing funds to support the second phase of research & development at this cutting-edge research hub," **said Senator Richard J. Ross**. "This will improve the lives of our nation's troops with products designed and manufactured right here in Natick."

"The research coming out of U.S. Army's Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Center continues to help protect those who serve our country," **said Representative David Linsky**. "It is great to see such innovative research coming out of the Natick Soldiers System."

The Baker-Polito Administration has committed more than \$100 million in funding over five years to the M2I2 effort, which provides a vehicle for the Commonwealth to invest in the national [Manufacturing USA](#) initiative, helping advance innovation and job growth by spurring cross-collaboration among companies, universities, national labs, government, incubators, accelerators, and other academic and training institutions. The Manufacturing USA initiative seeks to spur research into cutting-edge technologies that

can be applied to advanced manufacturing processes. The federal awards are leveraged several times over through a series of state and industry matches.

In addition to being the headquarters of the national effort to develop revolutionary fibers and textiles, overseen by AFFOA, Massachusetts is also a participant in regional manufacturing innovation institute nodes focused on robotics, photonics, flexible hybrid electronics, and biopharma manufacturing. In October, Governor Baker announced [\\$7 million in M2I2 awards](#) at UMass Amherst and the Baker-Polito Administration also announced [\\$11.3 million in grants](#) for UMass-Lowell, including \$10 million for a separate Fabric Discovery Center based in Lowell, also supported by the AFFOA institute. M2I2 investments are co-managed by the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development and the public economic development agency, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech).

[More than 10 percent of the Commonwealth's total economic output](#) is tied to manufacturing and in 2016, \$26 billion in manufactured goods were exported from the Commonwealth. Approximately 250,000 employees work in the manufacturing sector in Massachusetts, comprising 7.8 percent of the total workforce in the state. Massachusetts manufacturers interested in applying for grants through the M2I2 program can visit <http://m2i2.masstech.org> to learn more about the process.

## **About M2I2:**

*Launched by the Baker-Polito Administration in 2016, the Massachusetts Manufacturing Innovation Initiative (M2I2) aims to help Massachusetts manufacturers adopt innovative new technologies and provides funds for the Commonwealth to invest in the Manufacturing USA program. The Administration has committed \$100 million-plus in funding over five years to support M2I2 projects across the Commonwealth, investments which are managed by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. Through the creation of sector-specific Manufacturing USA Centers, M2I2 will advance innovations and job growth within the state through cross-collaboration among companies, universities, national labs, government, incubators, accelerators and other academic and training institutions. For more information visit <http://m2i2.masstech.org>.*

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